

NCA
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POLITICAL FEATURE NO. 1-1757
KABAKER/FRANCUCH

NOVEMBER 2, 1976

VOA CONSULTANT ON TURNOUT AND ATTITUDES --

NO. 1

(TAPE IN LIBRARY)

ANNCR:

VOA HAS RETAINED THE SERVICES OF DR. ARTHUR MILLER, DIRECTOR OF THE ELECTION STUDIES UNIT, WHICH IS PART OF THE SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER'S POLITICAL STUDIES BRANCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN. DR. MILLER CAME TO WASHINGTON FOR THE EVENING AND (EDITORS NOTE) IS LOCATED IN THE NEWSROOM AND IS AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION. HE WILL BE INTERVIEWED PERIODICALLY ON THE WORLDWIDE ENGLISH AIRSHOW AND BY NCA AT 9 PM, 11 PM, 1 AM AND 3 AM FOR HOUSE FEATURES. (END EDITORS NOTE) IN OUR PRELIMINARY CHAT, WITH RAY KABAKER HE DISCUSSED VOTER TURNOUT AND BASIC PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES:

VOICE:

UNLIKE OTHER OPINION SURVEY ORGANIZATIONS, THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'S ELECTION STUDIES UNIT TRIES TO MEASURE ATTITUDES AND SOCIAL TRENDS, AS A WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THE AMERICAN ELECTION PROCESS. BY MEANS OF EXTENSIVE PERSONAL INTERVIEWS, CONDUCTED BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER ELECTION DAY, THE ELECTION STUDIES UNIT TELLS HOW PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT POLITICAL CANDIDATES, THE PARTIES, ISSUES AND ABOUT GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL. DOCTOR MILLER SAID HE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN THE QUESTION OF VOTER TURNOUT:

TAPE: CUT ONE -- MILLER

"IN LIGHT OF WHAT LOOKS TO BE A FAIRLY HEAVY TURNOUT, IT'S INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT PEOPLE WERE TELLING US THAT THEY

WERE A LITTLE LEARY ABOUT GOING OUT TO VOTE THIS TIME. OUR PROJECTIONS, ON THE BASIS OF INTERVIEWS WITH PEOPLE, WAS THE TURNOUT MIGHT BE TWO TO THREE PERCENTAGE POINTS LOWER THAN IT WAS IN 1972, WHEN WE HAD ONLY 55 PER CENT OF THE ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE VOTING. BUT THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE IMPORTANT HERE. ONE IS HOW CONCERNED PEOPLE ARE IN TERMS OF THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION, HOW INTERESTED PEOPLE ARE IN THE ELECTION. INTEREST, ACTUALLY, WAS UP A BIT FROM 1972. IT WAS UP ABOUT SIX PERCENTAGE POINTS. THERE WERE THESE CROSS-CUTTING KINDS OF THINGS -- WHILE PEOPLE WERE TELLING US THEY WEREN'T GOING TO GO OUT AND VOTE AS MUCH AS THEY WERE IN 1972. IN 1976, MORE PEOPLE WERE ACTUALLY INTERESTED IN THE RACE, AND SO THAT FACTOR, PLUS THE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS AND THE PERCEPTION THAT IT REALLY IS A "HORSE RACE", WHICH USUALLY STIMULATES THE RECREATIONAL VOTER TO GO OUT AND VOTE, I THINK THOSE FACTORS WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO ACCOUNT FOR A HIGHER TURNOUT THAN EXPECTED IF THAT DOES INDEED OCCUR NATIONWIDE."

VOICE:

A HIGHLIGHT OF DOCTOR MILLER'S SURVEY, WHICH WAS COMPLETED JUST THIS WEEKEND, HAD TO DO WITH PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MAJOR CANDIDATES:

TAPE: CUT TWO -- MILLER

"CONTRARY TO WHAT THE POPULAR PERCEPTION WAS, AND WHAT THE MEDIA WERE SAYING, THERE WAS ACTUALLY A GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT FOR BOTH OF THE CANDIDATES -- BOTH CARTER AND FORD -- AND THE MEDIA OFTEN WERE SEEMING TO PRESENT A PICTURE THAT WAS VERY ONE-SIDED, WITH GERALD FORD, SINCE HE WAS PRESIDENT, HAVING A HIGH DEGREE OF RESPECT IN THE POPULATION AND CARTER NOT HAVING A GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT, AND SOMETIMES A LOT OF SKEPTICISM AND DOUBT ABOUT HIM. WHEN YOU ACTUALLY LOOK AT A WIDE VARIETY OF QUESTIONS WE ASKED PEOPLE ABOUT THE CANDIDATES THEMSELVES, YOU ACTUALLY FIND A HIGH DEGREE OF RESPECT ABOUT THEM -- BOTH OF THESE GENTLEMEN. FOR INSTANCE, IF YOU ASK PEOPLE IF FORD AS PRESIDENT COULD BE TRUSTED, OR CARTER AS PRESIDENT COULD BE TRUSTED, YOU FIND THAT ROUGHLY SIXTY-THREE PERCENT OF THE VOTERS SAY THEY (EACH) COULD BE TRUSTED. NOW PUT THAT INTO A FRAMEWORK, IN 1972, SIXTY PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE SAID THAT RICHARD NIXON COULD BE TRUSTED AS PRESIDENT, ONLY FORTY PERCENT SAID THAT GEORGE MCGOVERN COULD BE TRUSTED AS PRESIDENT. SO, ON THE WHOLE, WHEN YOU LOOK AT THIS QUESTION AND A NUMBER OF OTHER QUESTIONS THAT WE ASKED PEOPLE, YOU REALLY FIND THAT THROUGHOUT THE POPULATION, A FAIRLY HIGH DEGREE OF RESPECT FOR THE TWO GENTLEMEN WHO ARE RUNNING IN THE RACE."

VOICE:

SOME VIEWS OF DOCTOR ARTHUR MILLER, AN ELECTION STUDIES SPECIALIST FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, WHO WILL BE WITH VOA HERE IN WASHINGTON DURING ELECTION NIGHT.
PY/PBM